
**State Government & Tribal
Affairs Committee**

SSB 5566

Brief Description: Providing for privacy protection for certain voter registration information.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Government Operations & Elections (originally sponsored by Senators Franklin and Kohl-Welles).

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Allows public inspection of voter signatures on absentee ballot return envelopes, but not copying.

Hearing Date: 2/27/08

Staff: Colleen Kerr (786-7168).

Background:

Under statute, county auditors have custody of original voter registration records. These are confidential records and unavailable for public inspection and copying. For purposes of the statewide voter registration database, however, the county auditor must keep a computer file of each voter registration for that county. At a minimum, this computer file must contain the voter's full name, date of birth, residential address, gender, date of voter registration, applicable taxing district and precinct codes, and voting records. This information is available for public inspection and copying.

County auditors also maintain custody of absentee ballot records. These records include the return envelope for the absentee ballot. The return envelope has a space for the voter to provide the date on which the ballot was voted, a signature line, and place to provide the voter's telephone number. Providing this information allows the voter to attest to his or her eligibility to vote in that election. This information is covered by a secrecy flap to protect the anonymity of the voter.

Summary of Bill:

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

The absentee ballot return envelopes retained by the county auditor are subject to public disclosure, but the portion of the ballot with the voter's signature and telephone number is available for public inspection, but not copying.

Amended Bill Compared to Substitute Bill:

The amended bill places the provision allowing the inspection of voter signatures and telephone numbers, but not copying, in a different section of the code

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.